

Regan

Columbia University
in the City of New York
NEW YORK 27, N. Y.

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY

November 11, 1958

Prof. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Josh,

It was very kind of you to send such an explicatory letter to Kirk. As I read my copy the curtain of the past unrolled to reveal an exciting time. I had actually forgotten that I had arranged a small stipend for you when the V-12 program folded. Wherever did I get the money? ~~Those~~ were not the days of big grants for my research. But your nostalgia must be worse than mine. I never did and do not now consider myself your Teacher. I was just less able than others to keep you down.

Although I believe there are many more serious factors that keep Columbia College students out of real Biology, I agree with your comments and concur that there is an outmoded organization of subject material at Columbia's two campuses. I would have no objection to your sending your thoughts to Kirk and to whatever Departmental Chairmen you wished. Conversely, in the strongest terms I want to indicate that I will not lead any group in a reorganization that I believe has an insignificant chance of being realized.

As comments on the two points in the last sentence I submit that:

1. I sense an active hostility on the part of our administration towards science which probably stems from unwarranted feelings of inferiority *on the part of the humanists + social scientists.*
2. I sense a strong resentment on the part of my colleagues towards microbiology inasmuch as it is not "Zoology." (Yes, I believe my colleagues are either stupid or prejudiced and some are both.)
3. Rose, whom I have never met, has given me reason to believe that he did not change his department's name to Microbiology because he liked the sound of the word.

4. My long-standing efforts to introduce real Biochemistry to the lower campus have met with failure, beginning with the days when I tried to get Ed Tatum here.

5. You may recall I was once instrumental in helping defeat the establishment of a Genetics Department because I was convinced it was a schism designed to satisfy the urge to continue to administer on the part of one of my colleagues who had completed a six-year term as Chairman of Zoology.

6. I have the reputation here of being a manipulator to my own selfish ends.

Clearly you are saying to yourself that these are only obstacles to be overcome. But now the final reason: I no longer have the necessary ambition, poise, or confidence.

These comments are made with the same sense of privacy as yours were sent to me.

I hear you will soon visit the Shaws. We just had a visit from Hez - a happy one as usual.

All the best to you and Esther,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Francis". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Francis J. Ryan
Professor of Zoology

FJR:msm